

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NV-040-03-006

CATTLE CAMP WASH RIPARIAN RESTORATION PROJECT

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Ely Field Office

Prepared by: Grant Hoggan
July 9, 2003

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction

The proposed project area was identified as riparian habitat in need of protection, through a cooperative approach with the public, permittees, and other agencies in the Cattle Camp/Cave Valley Allotment Management Plan (AMP) completed in 1987.

The riparian restoration project and headcut stabilization are necessary to restore functionality to the riparian system. A headcut is an abrupt elevation drop in the channel of a gully (usually caused by a disturbance) that accelerates erosion as it undercuts the gully floor and migrates upstream. Heavy grazing pressure from both cattle and elk have led to the deterioration of the associated riparian vegetation. This has resulted in the area not being in conformance with the standards for riparian and wetland sites as developed by the Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC). Elk utilize the riparian zone within the stream bottom on a year-long basis. Beginning in early spring and extending until the beginning of the hunting season in mid August, elk are present in the riparian bottom or in the sagebrush fan during the majority of the day. The resultant use by elk alone has been measured at 30-40% of current years growth. Livestock use occurs during the summer and fall months. Coupled with the annual elk use, the standards for riparian management are not being met. In 2001, livestock turnout was modified to incorporate a late spring/early summer grazing strategy. Even with the modified use, however, grazing standards were not achieved, and an alternative solution was warranted. The riparian area would be relieved of grazing pressure by excluding livestock and limiting elk access. Riparian vegetation could reestablish, sediment could build up in the vegetation raising the water table and restoration of the riparian area to properly functioning condition could begin.

Need For the Proposal

The proposed actions are needed to restore the riparian area to proper functioning condition (PFC).

Relationship to Planning

The project is in conformance with the Proposed Egan Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/FEIS), dated December 24, 1983 and Egan Resource Area Record of Decision (ROD) signed February 3, 1987. It is in conformance with the goals outlined in the ROD, page 3, which states in part, "...develop and implement range improvements which emphasize greatest return on investment in relationship to resource needs....". The implementation of rangeland improvement projects is listed as a long-term selected management action (5-20 years) on page 20 of the RMP/FEIS.

The proposed project area was identified as riparian habitat in need of protection, through a cooperative approach with the public, permittees, and other agencies in the Cattle Camp/Cave Valley Allotment Management Plan (AMP) completed in 1987.

The project is consistent with the White Pine County Public Land Use Plan dated May 1998, which states that “The federal government should continue to make the public rangelands economically and realistically available for livestock grazing, where compatible with other multiple use objectives.”

The proposed action would occur within The Mount Grafton (WSA). Under the Wilderness Interim Management Plan (IMP), “...permanent installations to protect sources of water on which native wildlife depend, such as exclosures and protective fencing, may be built if they enhance wilderness values, are substantially unnoticeable, and cannot be located outside the wilderness boundary. Permanent riparian, wetland, and aquatic enhancement installations may be permitted as long as their purpose is to enhance wilderness values, protect or maintain natural conditions, and restore deteriorated habitat. These installations must be substantially unnoticeable...” (Ch. III, Section G, part 4).

The project would help meet the District’s goal of being in conformance with the Northeastern Great Basin Area Resource Advisory Council’s (RAC) Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, approved by the Secretary of the Interior on February 12, 1997. Standard 2, (Riparian and Wetland Sites) states in part, “...Riparian and wetland areas exhibit a properly functioning condition and achieve State Water Quality criteria.” Standard 3, (Habitat) states in part, “... Habitats exhibit a healthy, productive, and diverse population of native and/or desirable plant species, appropriate to the site characteristics, to provide suitable feed, water, cover, and living space for animal species and maintain ecological processes.”

Issues

External scoping with wilderness groups determined that potential impacts to wilderness characteristics was not an issue. Internal scoping determined that control of the headcut is a management issue.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action

There are two parts of the proposed action.

1. Build two temporary riparian exclosure fences.

The proposed exclosures would fence off the Cattle Camp Wash for approximately 1.5 miles. Two separate exclosures would be built, separated by a natural water gap which would allow for water access and movement by livestock. The total area within the

exclosures would be approximately 88 acres. (see Maps 1 and 2). Light pruning of big sagebrush and rabbitbrush along the fence line to facilitate construction would be allowed. The fences would be maintained by hand. The fences would be built to wildlife specifications (BLM Manual 1737), and would consist of a smooth bottom wire and three strands of barbed wire. Motorized access to build the fences would not be allowed. The fence materials would be transported to the site by foot. Green steel T-posts would be used for fencing.

2. The second part of the proposed action would be to install a loose rock structure at the site of the headcut.

The rock material would come from an existing BLM gravel pit located at the junction of the Sawmill Canyon road and the Cattle Camp/Horse Camp loop road approximately 10 miles south of Ely, Nevada. (T. 15 N., R. 64 E., Section 18)

The legal locations of the exclosures would be T. 11N., R. 65E., Section 7 and T. 11N., R64E., Section 12.

Monitoring

The area within the exclosures would be inspected annually to determine if the fences are still needed. The fences would be removed when it is determined that the erosion is no longer occurring and the vegetation has reached a stable ecological condition. If the area is designated as wilderness, the fence could be removed.

The exclosures and loose rock structure would be constructed by authorized contractors, BLM personnel, or the permittee. Construction work on the fences would commence during the summer or fall 2003 and would take from two to four weeks. If the fences are constructed during the period May 1 to July 15, a survey of the fence route would be completed prior to construction by the Ely Field Office wildlife biologist in order to comply with the requirements of the Migratory Bird Act. If the fences are built by someone other than the BLM, work would be supervised by a qualified project inspector to ensure fence specifications and standard operating procedures (SOP's) are followed. SOP's are requirements that must be met for any federal action on public lands, and are referenced on pages 25-28 of the Egan RMP/FEIS. Appendix I lists SOP's that would apply to this project.

Upon completion of the fence and loose rock structure, a final inspection would be made to ensure compliance with specifications. Any deficiencies would be corrected at that time. Periodic compliance checks for maintenance would be made in conjunction with riparian monitoring by a rangeland management specialist, wildlife biologist, or riparian specialist following completion of the fence.

The recovery of the riparian resource within the exclosures would be monitored. Monitoring techniques would consist of utilization checks from spring and summer elk use and livestock compliance checks. The channel would be monitored annually before

and after spring run-off to evaluate progress towards healing the gully, and to evaluate the effects of the healing on the water table.

The rangeland management specialist would collect the utilization data and check for livestock compliance. The wildlife biologist/riparian specialist would continue stream channel vegetative trend studies.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the exclosures and loose rock structure would not be built.

Alternatives Considered but Eliminated From Detailed Analysis

Livestock Management Considerations

One alternative considered was to delay cattle turn out until late summer. This has been attempted in the past and has failed to achieve the vegetative objectives.

Another alternative considered was to herd cattle away from the headcut and riparian area. This livestock management practice was eliminated from detail analysis because the Carter Cattle Company has practiced herding to keep cattle out of the riparian area but has had limited success.

An alternative to develop the fenced areas as riparian pastures was dropped from consideration due to the inability of the alternative to meet the need for the proposal.

Wilderness Considerations

A zig-zag fence design alternative, to enhance with Visual Resource Management objectives, was considered but would double the expense and is not necessary since the fence would be temporary.

The use of a wood structure instead of loose rock at the site of the headcut was considered because of their ability to eventually decompose leaving little trace of their presence. This alternative was eliminated from detailed analysis because the installation of such a structure in this situation would require a greater amount of ground disturbance to anchor it correctly than would the rock structure.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The affected environment is described in the Egan RMP/FEIS. The affected area is located within the Cattle Camp Pasture of the Cattle Camp/Cave Valley allotment (0903). The allotment encompasses approximately 74,770 federal acres and approximately 1,100 private acres for 75,870 total acres. Allotment elevations range from 7000 feet in the cattle camp wash drainage to 8500 feet at the summits. Topography ranges from steep

slopes to gradual alluvial fans. Average annual precipitation for the area is 8 – 10 inches. The allotment is broadly situated between the Egan and Schell Creek Mountain Ranges, in the extreme southern portion of Steptoe Valley, in southeastern White Pine County. Main access to the allotment is via the Cattle Camp Loop Road south of Ely. The affected area is part of the upper Cattle Camp Wash area.

Range

The affected area has been historically grazed by livestock. Currently, there is livestock permitted use within the Cattle Camp/Cave Valley allotment.

Vegetation

The principal vegetation is wetland and dry off-bank riparian types including Great Basin wild rye, basin big sagebrush, rubber rabbitbrush, Kentucky bluegrass, various species of sedges, rushes, and other aquatic plants. The expression of riparian vegetation is a consequence of the wetland area of concern having downcut over a period of several years and following at least two separate downcutting events.

Soils

The soils in the project area are predominantly loamy bottoms. These soils are deep, well drained and derived from mixed alluvium. Permeability is moderate to moderately rapid with high available water holding capacity. Some soils have a seasonally high water table at depths of 30 to 60 inches which allows for significant fluctuations in plant production. The expression of riparian vegetation is a consequence of the wetland area of concern having downcut over a period of several years and following at least two separate downcutting events.

Wilderness

The project area is located in the north end of the Mount Grafton Wilderness Study Area (WSA). This portion of the WSA was not recommended as suitable for wilderness designation by the BLM. It was “excluded because of the presence of many unnatural features including crested wheatgrass seedings, stock reservoirs, as well as many miles of fences and jeep trails. In addition, approximately 5 miles of the northern boundary is not based on easily seen features on the ground and this lack of identification is considered a manageability concern.” The core of the Mount Grafton WSA is in a natural condition and its large size and dissected topography has served to confine intrusions to the lower elevations. The high degree of naturalness within the WSA has been recognized with the designation of two scenic areas. Opportunities for solitude and recreation in the Mount Grafton WSA are outstanding.

Wildlife

The project area lies within elk and mule deer year-long habitat. Numerous other game and non-game wildlife species occupy the habitat within and adjacent to the project area.

Special Status Species (Federally listed, proposed or candidate Threatened or Endangered Species, and State sensitive species)

There are sage grouse strutting ground (leks) documented on the Cattle Camp/Cave Valley allotment. No strutting grounds are located adjacent to or within the proposed enclosure. The project is within typical sage grouse late summer brood rearing and loafing habitat.

Riparian

In the riparian meadow area, the dominant perennial grass species is Kentucky bluegrass. Nebraska sedge is present in the wetter areas of the meadow. Several species of annual plants are present in the portions of the proposed project area, which have been de-watered as a result of the lowering of the water table. The saturated zone within the proposed project area contains several species of perennial wetland plants including pioneering wetland species as well as high-quality soil binding perennial wetland species.

Cultural Resources

A cultural resource inventory needs assessment report was completed and signed by an Ely Field Office archeologist on 6/26/98. Following on-the-ground survey and design, a Class III cultural resources inventory would be conducted in the project area.

Invasive, Non-native Species (including noxious weeds)

Cheatgrass, a disturbance increaser annual grass has been identified in the project area. Numerous site visits to the proposed project have resulted in no noxious weeds being detected.

Visual Resource Management

The project is within a Visual Resource Management Class I. The Visual Resource Inventory, H-8411-1, Chapter 5, section b(1), states "The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer."

Recreation

Recreation in this area includes large game hunting and wildlife observation. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) racing has been conducted on existing two-track roads (dirt

roads) within the vicinity of the proposed project. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use has been observed on the boundary road. No off-road use of OHV's has been observed in the project area.

Hydrology

Degradation of the riparian area and progression of the head-cut was due to disturbances by livestock and elk. Surface water quality and reduces water flow have resulted from the lowered water table.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The following resources would not be impacted by the construction of the proposed fences.

- 1) Special Status Species (Federally listed, proposed or candidate Threatened or Endangered Species, and State sensitive species)
- 2) Floodplains and Wetlands
- 3) Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Wild and Scenic Rivers
- 4) Prime or Unique Farmlands
- 5) Environmental Justice
- 6) Cultural, Paleontological, and Historical Resource Values
- 7) Water Quality (Drinking)
- 8) Native American Religious Concerns
- 9) Wastes, Hazardous and Solid
- 10) Migratory Birds
- 11) Air Quality
- 12) Wild Horses and Burros

Range

Specific impacts include better control of cattle grazing resulting in reduced grazing pressure on the riparian area. Exclusion of cattle from the riparian area along with limiting elk access should result in recovery of riparian area functionality and achievement of the riparian standards defined by the Northeastern Great Basin Area Resource Advisory Council (RAC). Fine sediment would become trapped in a thick vegetation mat of perennial aquatic species such as sedges and rushes. Livestock use within the remainder of the Cattle Camp/Cave Valley allotment would be allowed to continue. Access to water by livestock would be available between the two exclosures.

Vegetation

Short-term impacts to vegetation would be limited to crushing or trampling during fence construction. Clearance along the fence line would not be allowed, but pruning along the fence line would be acceptable. In the long term, vegetation along the fence line should return to a composition similar to what existed prior to fence construction. As the water table rises with increased soil trapping and vegetation establishment, some of the off-bank riparian vegetation could decrease in favor of obligate riparian species.

Soils

Short-term impacts to soils (impacts for the first year following fence construction) from fence building activities should be minimal. A minor increase in soil compaction and disturbance to soil structure could result, due to construction activity. In the long-term (after the first year following fence construction) it is expected that soil characteristics within the riparian area would improve as a result of re-vegetation and reduced livestock hoof action along the wetland bottom. As riparian vegetation recovers within the exclosure, livestock would increase pressure around the exclosure and on the fence itself.

Wilderness

The Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP), Chapter 3, Section D, part 3(b), "...temporary livestock developments may be approved if, after completing a similar analysis as required in Section 2.a, above, they truly enhance wilderness values, and satisfy the non-impairment criteria." Introduction of a fence line surrounding approximately 88 acres would have an impact to the natural condition of the area. The impacts to wilderness values would be offset by the benefits of restoring the riparian area in to a more natural condition. The fence lines would be substantially unnoticeable due to the recommended minimal pruning and existing vegetation structure, which is primarily big sage brush and rabbitbrush over three feet in height.

Wildlife

In the short-term, during construction of the fence, resident wildlife attendant to the fence corridor, including birds and small mammals would be temporarily disturbed and

displaced. Elk would be displaced from fence construction areas. In the long term, after fence construction wildlife habitat would be enhanced within the exclosures by improved ground cover and improved plant composition and diversity. Elk use would be reduced within the exclosure for the life of the project. Previous experience has shown that elk use is reduced within exclosures. Access to water by wildlife would be available between the two exclosures.

It is possible that elk could be entangled in the fence. The fence would be constructed to Bureau wildlife specifications therefore minimizing possible entanglements.

Special Status Species (Federally listed, proposed or candidate Threatened or Endangered Species, and State sensitive species)

In rare instances, sage grouse could become entangled in the fence during travel to and from the riparian bottom. This impact would expect to be minimal, however, as the fence would be primarily constructed within an already thick and tall cover of brush, and sage grouse flying at heights sufficient to avoid the brush would most likely clear the fence. The 88 acres of improved riparian habitat would enhance sage grouse brood rearing habitat.

Riparian

Exclusion of cattle from the riparian area along with limiting elk access should result in recovery of riparian area functionality and achievement of the riparian standards defined by the Northeastern Great Basin Area Resource Advisory Council (RAC). Fine sediment would become trapped in a thick vegetation mat of perennial aquatic species such as sedges and rushes.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources identified or located within the project area would be avoided during fence construction to ensure that impacts would not occur.

Invasive, non-native species (including noxious weeds)

Fence building activity would not result in an increase in noxious weeds to the area. The Risk Factor for spread of noxious weeds is low at the present time (see Appendix II). Fence building activity could result in an increase in invasive or non-native species in the project area.

Visual Resource Management

The lines introduced by fencing the riparian areas would contrast with the natural lines found in the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape would be low and attract minimal attention. The impacts to Visual Resources would be offset by the benefits of sustaining the riparian area in a more natural condition. The temporary fence would be removed once the project is completed.

Recreation

Large game hunting and wildlife observation would not increase as a result of this project. No motorized vehicles would be allowed within the exclosures. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) racing would continue to use roads in the area. The proposed exclosures would not interfere with recreation activities.

Hydrology

There would be an improved riparian area resulting in higher quality surface water and increased water table associated with the spring and less erosion.

Cumulative Impacts

According to the 1994 BLM Handbook Guidelines for Assessing and Documenting The cumulative analysis should be limited to those issues and resource values identified during scoping that are of major importance. The issue of major importance identified was restoring the riparian area to Proper Functioning Condition (PFC). A general discussion of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions follows:

Past Action

The Mount Grafton (WSA) was designated as a Wilderness Study Area. Previous actions have occurred that have altered the physical environment in the project area. The subject riparian area and adjacent loamy bottom site had been cultivated at one time then abandoned. The rabbitbrush did not come in until the wetland area was de-watered. Subsequent fires and the lowering water table along with historical season long or spring/summer livestock grazing have contributed to the present state of the riparian area, preventing natural return to a higher ecological condition. Wildfires have not been frequent or catastrophic. Livestock grazing has been heavy to severe in the area which has altered the plant communities. There has been no historical oil or gas production or exploration. Recreational activities including OHV use have been minimal. Elk augmentation has occurred in the past which has resulted in increased use between elk and cattle grazing issues.

Present Actions

Continued overgrazing by cattle and elk in the project area is a problem preventing a natural return to a higher ecological condition. Continued season-long heavy grazing use has prevented the channel from stabilizing and has kept the gully bottom as a channel, rather than a wet meadow. The active flow within the channel is a result of the ongoing de-watering of the spring. The headcut continues its progression through the watershed due to the increased flow energy resulting from the elevation change in the channel above as opposed to below the channel. Elk use in the project area is variable from year to year, but is typically year-long. The Horse and Cattle Camp Loop Road is heavily used by hunters in the fall. In the previous two years, OHV racing has occurred on the Horse and Cattle Camp Loop Road. There have been no recent wildfires.

Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions

In the future Congress will make a determination whether or not to include this area in designated wilderness. Big game hunting (elk and mule deer) would increase as a result of the Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW) issuing more hunting permits. Livestock grazing would continue in the Cattle Camp/Cave Valley allotment in accordance with standards and guidelines for grazing. OHV racing could increase along the Horse and Cattle Camp Road. Other recreational activities could increase in the area in the reasonably foreseeable future. An additional riparian exclosure is planned to be constructed on approximately 20 acres of private land.

Cumulative Impacts

The water table would be raised and PFC eventually achieved. The exclosures would stabilize the banks along the riparian channel and increase obligate riparian vegetation within the channel. Surface water quality would be enhanced. Soil stability and vegetative composition, cover, and vigor would improve in the off bank areas adjacent to the riparian channel. The progress of the headcut would be halted. A slight increase in hunting and wildlife viewing could occur. No cumulative impacts of major concern are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

Anticipated Impacts of the No Action Alternative

According to the No Action Alternative, the exclosures would not be constructed. Elk and cattle would continue to overgraze and impact the soils and vegetation within the riparian area. The progress of the existing headcut would not be halted. The Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Riparian and Wetland Site and Habitat standards would not be met. Areas of overutilization would not be reduced. Water quality would not improve. Bank stability and obligate riparian vegetation within the channel would not improve. Vegetative composition, cover, and vigor in the off-bank areas would not improve. There would be no impact to soils, special status species, recreation, or invasive, non-native species (including noxious weeds) from the No

Action Alternative. The impacts to visual resources as described above would not occur. The impacts to wilderness values as described above would not occur. The cumulative impact as described above would not occur.

V. PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

Appropriate monitoring measures have been included in the Proposed Action (Section II.) No additional monitoring measures are proposed as a result of the analysis of the potential impacts.

VI. SUGGESTED MONITORING

Appropriate mitigation measures have been included in the proposed action (Section II.) No additional mitigation measures are proposed as a result of the analysis of the potential impacts.

VII. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Intensity of Public Interest and Record of Contact

A summary of the proposed action has been posted for public review on the BLM website. Following this, the public will be notified on the BLM website when the EA is completed, DR-FONSI signed, and 30 day appeal period initiated.

The Ely Field Office mails an annual Consultation, Cooperation, and Coordination (CCC) Letter to individuals and organizations that have expressed an interest in rangeland management related actions. Those receiving the CCC Letter have the opportunity to request from the Field Office more information regarding specific actions. Those requesting notification of range improvement actions are requested to respond if they want to receive a copy of the final EA and signed Decision Record/Finding of No Significant Impacts. The following individuals and organizations, who were sent the CCC Letter on January 10, 2003 have requested additional information regarding range developments or range improvements or range improvement programs within the Cattle Camp/Cave Valley allotment:

George I. Andrus
Betsy Macfarlan, Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition
David Buhlig, Nevada Land & Resource Co.
Mr. Steve Foree, Division of Wildlife
Mr. Dan Heinz
Mr. Robert D. Williams, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Melvin Gardner
Lincoln County Commission
Joseph W. Peacock
Russel W. Peacock
Mr. John McLain, Resource Concepts Inc.

Katie Fite, Committee for Idaho's High Desert
Jon Marvel, Western Watersheds Project
Steven J. Carter, Carter Cattle Company

Record of Consultation and Coordination

Mr. Steven Carter
Nevada Division of Wildlife
Stephen Smith, BLM Nevada State Office Wilderness Coordinator
Shaaron Netherton, Executive Director for Friends of Nevada Wilderness

On August 29, 2002 a Interim Management Policy (IMP) notification describing the Proposed Action was issued to approximately 85 wilderness groups and/or interested publics.

On May 31, 2001 the Cattle Camp Wash Riparian Fence proposal was presented to a Tribal Coordination meeting at the Ely BLM Field Office. No concerns were identified during this meeting. There were no questions or comments regarding the proposal from the Tribal participants.

Internal District Review

Chris Mayer	Rangeland Team Lead
Grant Hoggan	Range & Environmental Assessment
Jack Tribble	Wilderness/Visual Resources
Shane DeForest	Wildlife/T&E Species/Riparian/Noxious Weeds
Carolyn Sherve-Bybee	Cultural Resources
Paul Podborny	Soils and Air Quality
Elvis Wall	Tribal Coordination
Jeff Brower	Water Resources
Jake Rajala	Environmental Coordinator
Susan Baughman	District Writer/Editor

APPENDIX I STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The following standard operating procedures (SOP's) should be followed for the fence project:

1. Environmental assessment will be conducted before project development so that, depending on impact, modification or abandonment of the proposed project may be considered.
2. Cultural resources protection requires compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Section 2(b) of the Executive Order 11593, and Section 101(b)(4) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. Prior to project approval, intensive field (Class III) inventories will be conducted in specific areas that would be impacted by implementing activities. If cultural or paleontological sites are found, every effort will be made to avoid impacts.
3. Clearing of vegetation will be allowed on project sites. Light pruning of overhanging vegetation is allowed, but only within the fence lines, not to facilitate construction access.
4. Fence would be built to wildlife specifications utilizing the four wire-3 barbed, bottom smooth design. Wire spacing would be 16"-8"-8"-12"; bottom to top.
5. Motorized access to build the fences would not be allowed.
6. The "no activity" period for all management actions in migratory bird habitat is from 5/1 to 7/15 unless a survey is done to determine no migratory bird breeding or nesting is occurring in the area.

For any activity scheduled between 5/1 and 7/15 the following must take place:

Area which is going to be disturbed must be clearly identified on appropriate maps.

The wildlife team will conduct breeding bird surveys to identify if migratory bird breeding or nesting is occurring in the area.

7. For sage grouse wintering grounds, disturbance should be avoided from November 1 to March 31.

APPENDIX II NOXIOUS WEED RISK ASSESSMENT

Shane Deforest, Ely District Noxious Weed Specialist reported no current noxious weed establishment in the project area. Hoary cress or Whitetop is present approximately one mile from the project area. The Cattle Camp Wash Riparian Exclosures will be located in White Pine County, Nevada. The legal location for the exclosures is T. 11N., R. 65E., Section 7 and T. 11N., R. 64E., Section 12.

Factor 1 assesses the likelihood of noxious weed species spreading to the project area.

For this project, the factor rates as **low (2)** at the present time. This means that noxious weeds were located adjacent to, but not within, the project area. The fence lines will be surveyed for noxious weeds during the cultural resources inventory to confirm that no weeds occur within the project area.

Factor 2 assesses the consequence of noxious weed establishment in the project area.

For this project, the factor rates as **low (3)**. This means that there is very little likelihood that noxious weeds will spread to the proposed fence lines. No cumulative effects of noxious weeds spreading to the native plant community are expected.

The Risk Rating is obtained by multiply Factor 1 by Factor 2.

For this project, the Risk Rating is **low (6)** at the present time. This means that the project can proceed as planned. Control treatments would be initiated on noxious weed populations that get established in the project area. The fence lines should be monitored the first year following construction for noxious weeds.

Reviewed by: _____

Date: _____

**DECISION RECORD
AND
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
(DR/FONSI)**

**CATTLE CAMP WASH RIPARIAN RESTORATION PROJECT
EA NO. NV-040-03-006**

Decision: I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Cattle Camp Wash Riparian Restoration Project and concur with the analysis. I select the proposed action, as described, as my decision. This EA provides site-specific NEPA analysis. Appropriate mitigation and monitoring are identified in the proposed action, and no additional measures are deemed necessary as result of the impact analysis.

Rationale: The proposed action will improve the riparian vegetation and halt the progress of the headcut. In addition, soil stability and watershed protection will be enhanced. Through excluding livestock and limiting elk access, progression will be made towards achievement of standards and guidelines for grazing administration, and towards long-term management objectives for the Cattle Camp/Cave Valley allotment for both livestock and wildlife. The standard operating procedures and mitigating measures will minimize impacts of the fence and construction activities.

Findings of No Significant Impact: Based on the analysis I have determined that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) level of analysis is not required.

Rationale: The determining factors weighed by the Bureau of Land Management in reaching a finding of no significant impact are:

- The action will have no adverse effects on such unique characteristics as cultural resources, wetlands, or riparian areas.
- The environmental effects of the action are neither controversial nor do they involve unique or unknown risks.
- The action will enhance wilderness values, protect natural conditions and restore deteriorated habitat.
- The action does not threaten to violate a Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.
- The action will have no impact on migratory birds and their habitat.
- The action will have no adverse effects on the human health or environment of minority or low income populations.
- The cumulative impacts of the action would not be significant.

James M. Perkins
Assistant Field Manager
Renewable Resources

Date

